

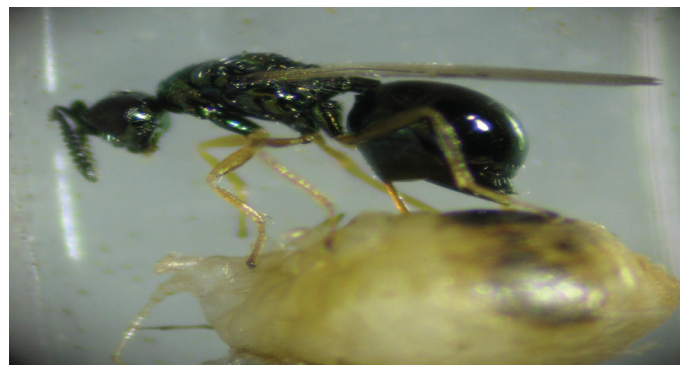
Advances in Biological Control & IPM

Olde Barn Hotel, Marston, Lincs, 16-17 October 2012

Now a firm fixture on the UK's calendar of IPM events, the objective of the conference is to create a gathering of the biocontrol community at which young scientists, experienced researchers and practitioners can detach themselves from their usual day-to-day pressures and become totally immersed in the subject. It is generally agreed that the interaction between 'like-minded' people who have complementary expertise enhances thinking and promotes collaborative ventures.

In order to involve as many people and topics as possible, speakers were restricted to individual slots of 15 minutes. The intention was to create awareness and pave the way for future interactions rather than present detailed research results. As always, the conference organisers were particularly keen to help younger scientists and practitioners bring their work to the attention of the broader integrated pest management (IPM) community.

The keynote presentation was given by Prof Toby Bruce of Rothamsted Research who is the new Convenor of the AAB Biocontrol and IPM Group. Toby described new EU pesticide-related legislation and explained how the Sustainable Use Directive could provide new opportunities for



There were twenty other presentations during the conference which explored alternatives to conventional chemical interventions in crop protection through IPM and integrated crop management as well as classical biological control. Speakers addressed a wide range of subjects from genetic control of important pests, through novel methods of controlling plant diseases, to the use of IPM techniques in animal health. It became apparent that there are different types of interventions that can be used in IPM including biocontrol agents for both insect pests and crop diseases, resistant crop cultivars and semiochemical baited traps, and that these need to be incorporated in packages that work.

Speakers at the 'Advances in Biocontrol & IPM' Conference



IPM. However, he warned of the risks to British Agriculture of restricting conventional plant protection products before reliable alternatives are available. Experienced IPM consultant, Dr Rob Jacobson, picked up on this theme by explaining the complexity of IPM and questioning whether policy makers were underestimating the challenge of designing and implementing whole IPM programmes for outdoor crops. Both speakers implored government to make more funds available for R&D, to apply sensible timescales to the implementation of IPM and to address the public's perception of the true value of good quality fresh food.

Judicious use of pesticide is often still required to manage pest outbreak situations but if they are used as a last resort populations of beneficials can be conserved and selection pressure for pesticide resistance is reduced.

The conference was deemed to have been both a technical and financial success. Sponsors were Becker Underwood, Certis BCP, HDC, Koppert Biological Systems, Rob Jacobson Consultancy and Russell IPM. The next AAB 'Advances in Biocontrol & IPM' conference will be held on 15 and 16 October 2013 and will incorporate the '2013 Biopesticides' conference.

- Rob Jacobson